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ABSTRACT

Traditionally, counselor educators have employed didactic methods and a Western European world view to train students who will serve minorities. This article proposes a curriculum approach which specifies the desired competencies expected of culturally sensitive, competent, multicultural counselors through experiential methods during training. To provide an example of a balance multicultural counselor training effort, the following components are specified: (1) 20 multicultural counseling competencies for use in multicultural counselor training; (2) 26 curriculum objectives instrumental in developing desired multicultural counseling competencies; and (3) a variety of experiential training methods valued in increasing multicultural awareness and sensitivity. (Author/TE)

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Experiential Training to Develop Culturally Competent Counselors

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Running Head: EXPERIENTIAL TRAINING

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Abstract

To provide an example of a balanced multicultural counselor training effort the following components are specified: (a) twenty multicultural counseling competencies for use in multicultural counselor training (b) twenty-six curriculum objectives instrumental in developing desired multicultural counseling competencies; and (c) a variety of experiential training methods valued in increasing multicultural awareness and sensitivity. Traditionally, counselor educators have employed didactic methods and a Western European world view to train students who will serve minorities. This article proposes a curriculum approach which specifies the desired competencies expected of culturally sensitive, competent, multicultural counselors through experiential methods during training.

Experiential Training to Develop Culturally Competent Counselors

Introduction

Two national professional organizations of counselors, the American Association of Counseling and Development (APGA Ethical Standards of the AACD, 1981) and the American Psychological Association (APA, Ethnical Standards of Psychologist, 1981), acknowledge the importance of providing appropriate services to minority clients and training service providers who will be able to assist minority clients competently. Although the inability of training programs to prepare culturally effective counselors was acknowledged nearly a quarter of a century ago (Wrenn, 1962) efforts still lag for improving cross cultural effectiveness in counselor trainees (Parker, Bingham, and Fukuyama, 1985; and Johnson, 1987). Consequently professional counselors are still culturally encapsulated i.e., they assume universality and ignore cultural differences which results in less effective service delivery to clients ethnically, racially, or culturally different from the counselor (Wrenn, 1985).

The foundation of traditional counseling theories and practices are based on a world view of human behavior which is derived from and reflects primarily individuals of European descent, often excluding women of this heritage. The bias results in inadequate service delivery to minorities including Blacks, Hispanics, Asian Americans and Native Americans.

Pedersen & Marsella (1982) suggest that cultural

encapsulation of counselors to minorities be combated with (a) modification of beliefs and attitudes which reflect sensitivity to cultural differences, (b) knowledge which contrast various cultures and explores implication of cross-cultural interventions; and (c) skill which matches appropriate interventions with the appropriate cultural systems, in an appropriate manner. These three assumptions form the basis for the 20 competencies listed later in the paper that insure that counselors meet the needs of their culturally diverse clients.

The following training models singularly address either the attitude deficit, knowledge deficit, or skill deficit. Approaches recommended to ameliorate attitudinal deficiencies include sensitivity training (Hulnick, 1977); awareness group experience (McDavis & Parker, 1977); and consciousness raising (Copeland, 1982). Harper (1973) recommended that the acquisition of knowledge about the social studies (e.g. history, sociology, economics, etc.) of Black Americans, for example, would ameliorate knowledge deficiencies regarding Blacks and thereby improve counseling effectiveness with Black clients. The Triad Model developed by Pedersen (1977) is one training strategy wherein the skill deficit has been addressed. The Model uses role play situations to help counselor trainees develop skill to recognize the impact of a client's culture upon the counseling process and to provide an opportunity to develop and practice culturally appropriate intervention strategies.

While traditional didactic-intellectual approaches are

effective in sharing information, other methods of instruction are more effective in influencing the affective domain of the learner; models of learning which include active participation of the learner are superior (Kirkpatrick, 1983; Kolb, 1984; Sugarman 1985; Murrell & Claxton, 1987). A combination of didactic and experiential methods have been previously employed in counselor training (Carkhuff & Truax, 1965; Payne, Weiss, & Kapp; 1972).

Johnson (1987) describes the dichotomy observed in training outcomes for participants of multicultural counselor training as the "knowing that versus the knowing how" dilemma. He suggests that didactic multicultural training results in practioners "knowing that" (the customs, beliefs, etc.) but not "knowing how" i.e., (the capability to perform effectively within the culture). As a result of these findings special attention is devoted to experientially based training methods.

Experiential training is particularly helpful in multicultural counselor training. In addition to modifying both the emotional and cognitive components, it provides a systematic method for dealing with emotionally charged issues, biases, stereotypes, fears, and negative attitudes. Further, this method is less threatening when identifying prejudices and deeply ingrained attitudes. The experiential approach also provides an opportunity to experience and practice different behaviors which will facilitate cross-cultural interactions.

The purposes of this article are (a) to propose a list of

multicultural counseling competencies which counselor educators can use in cross-cultural counseling training; (b) to identify curriculum objectives which will be instrumental in developing desired multicultural counseling competencies; and (c) to identify experientially based training methods useful in multicultural counselor training.

Curriculum Objectives and Competencies

Various multicultural counseling publications were reviewed to determine their content generally related to students training and effectiveness. Thirty two objectives were isolated from the literature which develop desired multicultural counseling competencies. A survey of rehabilitation counselor educators was conducted to determine the level of importance placed on these issues (Watson, 1988). Subsequent surveys were planned to investigate counselor educators preparation of students for other professional settings, such as, mental health, and student development or etc. consequently these 32 objectives may be relevant and appropriate to different groups of counselor educators. The thirty two curriculum objectives were factor analyzed and collapsed into nine factors. This analysis was based on ratings of importance (1 = very important to 5 = very unimportant) obtained from rehabilitation counselor education n = 91, representing 38% response rate.). A mean score representing the level of importance for each factor was also obtained. Using this mean score the factors were ranked from most important to least important. Six of the thirty-two

curriculum objectives which make up one of the nine factors were related to training methods rather than educational content; they were eliminated, leaving twenty-six curriculum objectives under 8 factors listed in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 Here

Table 2 provides a rank ordered listing of the 8 factors and mean value i.e., level of importance of each factor, as judged by survey participant.

Insert Table 2 About Here

A number of multicultural counseling competencies were identified as a result of reviewing the multicultural counselor training literature, especially Sue et al. (1982). Twenty multicultural counselor competencies were expected to be developed as a result of utilization of the cross-cultural counseling curriculum objectives identified above. These competencies are listed in Table 3.

Insert Table 3 About Here

Experiential Approaches

Several experiential exercises have been identified which as

instrumental in developing desired multicultural counseling competencies. Table 4 provides a listing of recommended experiential exercises. Each exercise is designed to develop the competencies associated with each Factor. A detailed discussion of three of the experiential exercises is provided below including an explanation of how the exercise is intended to achieve specific competencies.

Insert Table 4 About Here

Factor I, labeled "Counselor Valuing" consists of one curriculum objective i.e., to value the culturally racially and/or ethnically different client. The competency to be developed by the prospective counselor is verbal and nonverbal expression of acceptance in a manner that is appropriate to and understood by the client.

An extremely important aspect of valuing another person is consideration and acceptance of ones own cultural values. This initial step permits the counselor the opportunity to examine his/her personal values and identify those things which are important and to compare ones personal values with the values of others. Such a comparison is essential because it tends to identify potential conflicts or barriers to effective communication across cultures. Although numerous experiential exercises exist to facilitate this process the Implicit Assumptions Checklist Exercise reported by Weeks, Pedersen, &

Brislin (1985) is recommended.

The Implicit Assumption Checklist Exercise is advantageous because it identifies the values which are closely related to white, middle class American values. In addition the exercise provides the mechanism to contrast and compare these values with the values of other groups. Such an exercise is useful in various multicultural counselor training efforts, e.g., practicums, internships or in-service training. In addition to raising awareness, the exercise creates an opportunity for group members to explore how their values may be understood, modified or reprioritized so as to decrease conflict and increase harmony and productivity. Specific issues addressed with this exercise include the meaning attributed to: (a) activity, (b) social relations, (c) motivation, (d) different perceptions of the world, and (e) perception of self or other individual. This exercise is particularly valuable because many theorist have underscored the importance of these issues in multicultural counseling yet there have been few experiential offerings which address the issue as systematically and comprehensively.

Factor II is labeled "Motivating Client". It consists of the two curriculum objectives which provide motivational support for clients who process values and a life style different from the counselor and whose vocational aspirations may not have been previously reinforced by educational and other social systems.

Client motivation has long been a major concern of counselors. Zastrow (1981) indicates that client motivation and

counselor encouragement are inherent aspects of effective counseling. Zastrow (1981, p. 78) states "counselees must come to say to themselves I think I can improve my situation - I want to better myself." He further explains that constructive change cannot occur until the client becomes motivated. Hepworth & Larsen (1982) offer a four step procedure for motivating clients. The four steps include (1) resolving negativism and resentment, (2) resolving ambivalence, (3) creating incentives and (4) creating hope. It is difficult to motivate any client and it is even more difficult to motivate clients whose aspirations and achievement have been limited because of external factors such as racial discrimination or institutional racism. Because enhancing motivation is a multi-step process, a variety of counseling competencies are necessary. The Triad Counseling Model is one experiential exercise believed to be very valuable in facilitating these competencies.

The Triad Model developed by Pederson (1977) has been recommended as an effective method to teach culturally specific knowledge as well as to acquire multicultural counseling skills (Neimeyer, et. al. 1986). The Model employs a video self-confrontation method which is often compared to Kagan's Interpersonal Process Recall Technique (Kagan, 1975). Pedersen (1985) indicates that the Triad Counseling Model involves three individuals in a role play situation. They include the counselor, the client and a third individual who functions as either the anti-counselor (i.e., one who demonstrates explicitly

the differences in counselor and client expectations and values) or the pro-counselor (i.e., one who demonstrates explicitly the similarities in expectations and values of the counselor and client). The exercise is a particularly attractive training tool as Pedersen (1985) points out:

> "Immediate and continuous feedback from the client, anti-counselor, and pro-counselor to the culturally different counselor provides an opportunity for the counselor to increase skill in (1) perceiving the problem from the client's viewpoint, (2) recognizing specific sources of resistance, (3) reducing counselor defensiveness, and (4) rehearsing recovery skills for getting out of trouble." (p. 320).

Utilization of the Triad Counseling Model with students who rehearse efforts to enhance motivation provides the necessary feedback to assess their effectiveness and, when appropriate, an opportunity to modify their practice.

Factor III, labeled "Evaluating Formal and Informal Assessment Procedures", is rated the third most important factor. Factor III consists of the following curriculum objectives for counselors: (a) address concerns and apprehensions about testing; (b) recognize limitations of existing assessment procedures with culturally different clients; (c) reduce language barriers/difficulties in test taking; (d) be aware of the shared experiences of culturally different clients as well as their uniqueness; (e) be aware of special needs and abilities of

culturally different clients; and (f) be aware of unique life experiences, without attributing positive or negative meaning to them.

Five competencies are to be developed as a result of the curriculum objectives listed above. They are identified as competencies 7, 8, 9, 13, and 14 listed in Table 3. A combination of experiential exercises are recommended to help facilitate the development of the desired competencies; the first is entitled Role Playing Emotions (Weeks, Peterson, & Brislin, 1985).

Role Playing Emotions is a procedure designed to illustrate how emotions are expressed differently or similarly among different cultures. Group participants are requested to (a) pantomime a particular emotion, (b) observe others pantomime and identify the emotions expressed, and (c) discuss the similarity and dissimilarity ir the expression and interpretation of emotions from culture to culture. This is expected to increase ones awareness regarding dubious distinctions between normal versus pathological behavior. Thus, practioners learn to distinguish between behavior which is culturally different versus behavior which is pathological.

Another exercises that develops other competencies associated with the curriculum objectives is Critical Incidents (Sue, 1981). It may be particularly useful in demonstrating how a counselor's enculturation tends to influence counselor perception and assessment. The same Critical Incidents may also

be employed to increase counselor skill and knowledge regarding multicultural counseling and assessment.

The five remaining factors include: (a) using appropriate theories and strategies; (b) identifying and using culturally specific community resources; (c) advocating for clients; (d) combating institutional racism; and (e) assessing the effects of counselor-client similarity/dissimilarity. Table 4 provides additional illustration for each factor of (1) counselor competencies to be developed; (2) experiential exercises useful in developing desired competencies, and (3) sources for additional information about experiential exercises.

Summary

This discussion is offered as an example of one effort in using experiential content to train culturally competent counselors. It is offered as an example that might be replicated by other counselor educators involved in multicultural counselor training. We eagerly anticipated further discussion regarding appropriate Curriculum Objectives and desirable multicultural counseling competencies. It is expected that additional experiential exercises will be developed. Empirical research exploring the effectiveness of various experiential curriculum, as well as, experiential research comparing the effective of experiential vs. didactic multicultural training is expected.

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Table 1

Curriculum Objectives Comprising Each Factor

Factor I: Valuing culturally, racially, ethnically different clients.

1. Value culturally, racially, different clients

Factor II: Motivating Client

2. Motivate clients who possess values and life styles different from the counselor.

3. Motivate clients whose vocational aspirations may not have been reinforced by social systems (e.g., educational, job market, social service agencies) because of their race, culture and/or class.

Factor III: Evaluating Formal and Informal Assessment Procedures

4. Address concerns and apprehensions about testing experienced by culturally different clients.

5. Recognize the limitation of existing assessment procedures with culturally, racially or ethnically different clients.

6. Be aware of special needs and abilities of culturally different clients.

7. Be aware of the shared experience of culturally different clients as well as their uniquenesses.

8. Be aware of unique life experiences without attributing positive or negative meaning to them.

9. Reduce possible language barriers and develop strategies to minimize them.

Factor IV: Using Appropriate Counseling Theories and Strategies

10. Assess the appropriateness of their counseling techniques with culturally different clients.

11. Assess the usefulness of traditional counseling theories to explain the behaviors of culturally, racially, or ethnically different clients.

12. Acknowledge their (the counselor's) personal biases which may decrease effective cross-cultural counseling and initiate appropriate procedures to overcome them.

13. Understand unique verbal and nonverbal behaviors of culturally different clients.

Factor V: Identifying Cultural Differences and Using Cultural Specific Resources

14. Identify and use culture-specific resources in the community that may facilitate program completion.

Factor VI: Advocating for the Client

15. Function as advocates for culturally different clients.

16. Teach culturally different clients to serve as their own advocates

17. Understand the historical dissatisfaction of culturally different clients with traditional human service delivery.

Factor VII: Combatting Institutional Racism

18. Apply for services.

19. Be accepted for services

20. Continue until completion of services.

Factor VIII: Assessing the Effects of Counselor-client Similarity/Dissimilarity

21. Know the relationship between socio-political conditions and success of culturally different clients in rehabilitation and human services.

22. Be aware of unique benefits and obstacles involving minority counselor-majority client combinations.

23. Be aware of unique benefits and obstacles that arise when the counselor and client are from the same majority group.

24. Be aware of unique benefits and obstacles that arise when a minority counselor serves a client from a different minority group.

25. Be aware of unique benefits and obstacles that arise when a majority counselor serves a minority client.

26. Participate in human services programs.

Table 2

Factor and Mean Rating of Importance of Each Factor

	Factor Label	Mean Rating of Importance of Factor
I.	Valuing Culturally, Racially, Ethnicly Different Clients	1.30
II.	Motivating Clients	1.39
III.	Assessing Formal/Informal Assessment Procedures	1.51
IV.	Using Appropriate Counseling Theories and Strategies	1.53
V.	Identifying Cultural Differences and Utilizating Cultural Specific Resources	1.60
VI.	Advocating for the Client	1.66
VII.	Combatting Institutional Racism	1.74
VIII.	Assessing the Effects of Counselor Client Similarity/Dissimilarity	1.92

Note. Low mean rating indicate greater importance i.e., 1 = very important, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = undecided, 4 = somewhat unimportant, and 5 = very unimportant.

Table 3

Multicultural Counseling Competencies

1. Counselors will express acceptance of the client verbally and nonverbally in a manner which is appropriate to the client's experience and which will be understood by the client.

2. Counselors will select and use counseling approaches that help the client to identify goals consistent with the client's values and lifestyle.

3. Counselors will select and use counseling approaches that result in accurate problem identification, accurate assessment of resources, and realistic/appropriate action plans.

4. Counselors will select and use culturally relevant/culturally appropriate counseling approaches that actually encourage the client.

5. Counselors will express empathy verbally and nonverbally in a manner that is appropriate and understood.

6. Counselors will be able to identify client's rewards and assist the client in identifying his/her rewards or motivators .

7. Counselors will accurately differentiate between individual idiosyncrasy, cultural/racial idiosyncrasy, and pathological behaviors.

8. Counselors will recognize advantages and limitations of standardized assessment procedures with clients from different sexual, racial, cultural, and socio-economic groups.

9. Counselors will select and use the most appropriate assessment procedures considering the client's cultural, or racial characteristics and interpret results accurately and in a manner which is understood by the client.

10. Counselors will be able to assess their own personal attitudes and beliefs about different individuals or groups of individuals, and assess the impact of their attitudes and beliefs on their counseling behavior.

11. Counselors will accurately send and receive verbal and nonverbal messages.

12. Counselors will be able to assess client's level of development on the minority development model and introduce counseling strategies and recommend community resources which are most appropriate to the client.

13. Counselors will be able to perceive the problem from the client's cultural perspective.

14. Counselors will be able to distinguish between intrapsychic concerns (i.e., problems of a personal or individual nature that arise independent of ethnic/minority status) and extra psychic concerns (i.e., problems resulting from sources outside the individual which are societal or environmental), and select intervention strategies that are intrapsychical or extra psychically focused.

15. Counselors will be able to use strategies which address client's extra psychic concerns, e.g., (advocacy) as well as traditional strategies which address intrapsychic functioning. (Specific counselor skills associated with advocacy seem to include (a) identifying clients needs and rights, (b) identifying individuals and institutional policies/procedures which can facilitate a change in the client's situation, (c) requesting desired change via appropriate channels, and (d) continuing request until resolution is achieved).

16. Counselor will be able to teach clients to use strategies directed at alleviating extra psychic concerns. (Advocacy is an example of one strategy clients might learn to address their concerns and the concerns of fellow clients).

17. Counselors will be able to identify agency policies and procedures which inadvertently discourage minorities from (a) applying, (b) being admitted, or (c) actively participating in agencies; and encourage minorities to (d) prematurely terminate involvement with an agency when the above are found.

18. Counselors will understand the effects of social and political conditions on successful completion of programs by minority individuals.

19. Counselors will understand unique dynamics, situations, and benefits as a result of counseling that involves minority counselors and minority or majority clients.

20. Counselors will select and use counseling approaches and techniques which are appropriate and consistent with the client's world view and lifestyle.